

MINUTES of the CORPORATE GOVERNANCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Held in the Conference Room, Epping Hall on **Tuesday 24th February 2026 at 8pm.**

PRESENT: Cllr R Sharif (Chairman & Deputy Town Mayor)
Cllr G Scruton (Key Member Finance)
Cllr N Avey (Key Member Administration)

OFFICER: Beverley Rumsey (Town Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer)

400 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

401 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received from members.

402 DISPENSATIONS

There were no dispensations.

403 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions or comments.

404 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Corporate Governance Advisory Committee meeting held on 28th October 2025 be signed by the Chairman as a true record.

405 STATUS OF PREVIOUS RECOMMENDATIONS

There were no previous recommendations requiring action.

406 CORPORATE GOVERNANCE DOCUMENT REVIEW

Council **APPROVED** a review of policy and governance documents at the Ordinary Council meeting on 8th March 2016 (Minute #478 of 2015/16).

The list of policies for annual review and the dates for review were as follows (annually):

Internal and External Audits: **February & October** (Now at the closest Council meeting to when received)

Internal Audit Programme: **October (Now at the Annual Council meeting)**

Statement on Internal Control: **October**

Insurance Inventory: **February (Working document to inform the Asset Register)**

Asset Register: **February (Dealt with under agenda item 10)**

Internal Risk Register: **February (Dealt with under agenda item 9)**

Staffing Terms and Conditions: **February & October (Dealt with under items 14-16)**

Standing Orders & Financial Regulations: February (**Dealt with under agenda item 8**)

Employee Handbook: **October (if changes are required. If not, after each new Council (October CGAC)**

Risk Management Statement: **October**

Please note these were the current recommended review dates, but legislation may amend the dates if an earlier review is required.

Changing regulations and audit comments may add further items to this list.

The CGAC review process leads to recommendations to Council for amendments to documents to be made.

At the Corporate Governance meeting on 25th February 2025 (Minute #420 of 2024/25), Committee RECOMMENDED that the review process should be changed (Minute #463 of 2024/25), with the Town Clerk bringing items for review at the frequency required legally or deemed necessary. The list of policies held would be shared at the Annual Council meeting each year.

Some items still need reviewing annually and these are itemised above and will continue to be placed on the relevant February or October Corporate Governance Advisory Committee agendas.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The Town Clerk would present the new policy review document to Council again as a reminder of Council's policies.

407 **STANDING ORDERS & FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

Statutory Basis: Local Government Act 1972, sch 12, para 42; Local Audit & Accountability Act 2014

There had been some minor changes to the model Standing Orders since the last review. The Town Clerk had therefore made changes to this document. The existing and revised were presented to Committee as per **Attachments B & B1**.

There had been recommended changes to the model Financial Regulations since the last review. The Town Clerk had therefore made changes to this document. The existing and revised were presented to Committee as per **Attachments C & C1**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The Standing Orders (with amendments) should be RECOMMENDED for ADOPTION by Council;
- (ii) The Financial Regulations (with amendments) should be RECOMMENDED for ADOPTION by Council.

408 INTERNAL RISK REGISTER

Statutory Basis: Local Audit & Accountability Act 2014

The Town Clerk has reviewed the Internal Risk Register and made some additions.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The Internal Risk Register with amendments should be **RECOMMENDED** for **ADOPTION** by Council;
- (ii) It was **RECOMMENDED** that the Risk Register be revisited and revised as need/circumstances required (if needed), in addition to its annual review.

409 ASSET REGISTER

Statutory Basis: Local Audit & Accountability Act 2014

At the Ordinary Council meeting on 11th March 2025, Council **RESOLVED** to record individual items equal to or greater than £1000 in the Asset Register (Minute #463 (iv) of 2024/25).

PLEASE NOTE: The Asset Register records all individual items of £1000 or greater. Council have many assets whose value is less than £1000 and these are recorded in Council's inventories which are updated annually. This is standard practice.

There has only been one acquisition and one disposal (individual items over £1000) during 2025/26 which is reflected in the Asset Register 2026, as per **Attachment E**.

Committee considered the following **RECOMMENDATIONS**:

- (i) Council should continue to record assets as individual items with a value equal to or greater than £1000 in the Asset Register;
- (ii) The Asset Register 2026, as per **Attachment E**, should be **APPROVED** as a correct record of Council's assets at this time;
- (iii) Any revisions to the draft will be presented to full Council in March.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The three **RECOMMENDATIONS** above would be **RECOMMENDED** for **APPROVAL** by Council.

410 HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY

Epping Town Council's Health & Safety Policy was **APPROVED** on 11th March 2025 (Minute #463 (vii) of 2024/25) and is now due for review. Committee considered the Health & Safety Policy, as per **Attachment F**. The Town Clerk has added 3 policies to the Health & Safety policy, as these 3 clauses were highlighted by Peninsula as missing: Fit For Work policy (~~F1~~) No Smoking Policy (~~F2~~), Alcohol & Drugs Policy (~~F3~~)

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The Health & Safety Policy as per **Attachment F**, would be **RECOMMENDED** for **APPROVAL** by Council, with the added 3 policies as per **Attachments F1-F3** (appended to the policy).

411 **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

It was **RESOLVED** that under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and representatives of the press and broadcast media be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items of business as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

412 **NEW INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT) POLICY**

Committee considered the new draft IT policy, which is required as part of the new Assertion 10 audit requirements. This draft will be worked on by the Town Clerk and Council's IT provider.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The IT policy would be a working draft which would be worked on by the Town Clerk and Council's IT provider and then be brought back to Committee or Council for **APPROVAL** as a policy of Epping Town Council.

413 **INSURANCE POLICIES (CONTRACTS) & RECONCILIATION**

Statutory Basis: Local Government Act 1972, s111; Local Authorities (Indemnities for Members & officers) order 2004

Committee **NOTED** the insurance information (this will be a mid term (start of Year 2) uplift and forthcoming renewal details for July 2026. The Town Clerk will prepare the necessary documentation in advance of the renewal.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) would work on the renewal documentation once received and it would be brought to Council.
- (ii) The Town Clerk/Responsible Financial officer (RFO) would check the provision for cover for Key Personnel;
- (iii) The Town Clerk/ Responsible Financial officer (RFO) would work on Cyber Essentials with Council's IT Provider.

Please note: the insurance quotations generally arrive quite close to the renewal date (1st July each year) giving insufficient time for it to be included on a Council agenda in advance of the renewal, which has to take place on that date for continuity of cover.

414 STAFF PAY SCALES

Statutory Basis: Local Government Act 1972, s112

Committee **NOTED** that Epping Town Council staff are governed by the terms of conditions set by the NJC (National Joint Council) (set by NALC and SLCC). The current staff pay scales are listed as per **Attachment H**.

The pay scales which came into effect on 1st April 2025, were received in July 2025 and was backdated. This delivered an increase across all scale points of 3.2%. It is very common for pay awards to arrive in November of the relevant financial year and when they are received after 1st April, salaries are backdated accordingly. Please note: discussions on the 2026/27 staff pay awards are still ongoing at union level. The Town Clerk/RFO has built an increase of approximately 4% into the 2026/27 budget.

The Essex Pension Fund (which relates to all relevant staff employed with Epping Town Council prior to 2018) employer pension contribution rate from 1st April 2025 is 24.8% (1st April 2023-1st April 2026). We have been advised that the employer pension contribution rates for the 2026/27 fund year will be 23.8%, 22.8% for the 2027/28 fund year and 21.8% for the 2028/29 fund year. The employer pension contribution rate for NEST (which relates to all relevant staff employed with Epping Town Council after 2018) is currently 8% (a minimum of 3% from the employer, 5% from the employee: 4% from the employee, 1% tax relief) (from 6th April 2019) onwards). We have not received any alternative NEST rates for 2025 at the time of writing.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) No further action was required at the current time.

415 STAFFING MATTERS and STAFF TERMS & CONDITIONS

Statutory Basis: Local Government Act 1972, s112

Committee **CONSIDERED** the RECOMMENDATION from the Town Clerk that Staffing Matters and Terms & Conditions would remain an item on the Corporate Governance Committee agenda but would only be a detailed item if there were matters to note or requiring attention. Otherwise, it would state:

There are no staffing matters requiring attention at the current time.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) Committee would RECOMMEND this to Council.

416 **TOWN CLERK APPRAISAL**

Statutory Basis: Local Government Act 1972, s112

Committee **NOTED** the Town Clerk's appraisal which would be undertaken in February 2026, by the Chairman of Council 2025-26, Cllr Janet Whitehouse.

The Chairman closed the meeting at **9.08pm**.

(NB: The matters on this agenda have a statutory basis under the Local Government Act 1972 in sections 101 and 111, in addition to those stated.)

Signature of Chairman

Date